

proportion of inquests held in those towns in which the proportion of uncertified deaths, as stated above, is excessive did not exceed 3·7 per cent. in St. Helens, 4·1 in Warrington, 4·8 in Preston, 5·1 in Birmingham and in Bootle, and 6·2 per cent. in Liverpool. It would thus appear that there is a pretty constant relation between the proportions of uncertified causes of death and the proportions of inquests held. The grave importance, from many points of view, of the due certification of all causes of death is beyond question, and it may be hoped that fuller coöperation between local sanitary authorities and coroners will ere long reduce the proportions of uncertified deaths in those towns in which they are still excessive.

#### THE RESUSCITATION OF THE APPARENTLY DROWNED.

IN his forthcoming Hunterian lectures "On the Mechanism Underlying the Various Methods of Artificial Respiration," to be delivered at the Royal College of Surgeons of England on March 1st, 3rd, and 5th, Dr. A. Keith, conservator of the museum, will deal with the results of the various methods of resuscitation of the apparently drowned as shown in the records kept by the Royal Humane Society at Hunter's suggestion. It is not generally known that the paper contributed by Hunter to the Royal Society in 1776 on the "Best Means for Recovering the Apparently Drowned" was really an answer to a request made to him by Dr. William Haines, the founder of the Royal Humane Society. Hunter suggested that the society should keep records of the means employed in every case and the result of their application.

#### OFFICIAL MEDICAL REPORTS IN EGYPT IN ROMAN TIMES.

Dr. B. P. Grenfell and Dr. A. S. Hunt have just published their annual volume (the sixth in succession) of editions of the papyri found at Oxyrrhynchus. As usual, there are interesting documents illustrating the duties of medical men in Egypt under the Roman Dominion, and the new evidence is the more valuable because derived from the contents of absolutely contemporary records which almost from the actual date of their engrossment have been preserved in the ruins of the residence of the city archivist to whom they were delivered for custody. The most important new manuscript of this kind in the recent volume is the report of two doctors retained as medical officers by the municipality of Oxyrrhynchus as to the health of an official employed by the Logistes or provincial governor. The date of the inquiry is definitely deducible as A.D. 316 because the Roman consuls for that year are mentioned in the first half of the papyrus which contains a surveyor's estimate for the hygienic repair of the public baths, submitted to the same governor. The second report runs as follows:—

To Valerius Ammonianus logistes of the Oxyrrhynchite nome from the Aurelii Heron son of ..... and Didymus son of Dioscurus, both of the illustrious city of Oxyrrhynchus, public physicians. We were sent by you to-day; Pharmouthi 6; in consequence of a petition delivered to you by Apollonius, officer of Aurelius Antonius, governor of Aegyptus Herculis, to proceed to the house in the said city, and inspect this person, and to make a written report upon the condition in which we found him. Having therefore proceeded thither we saw the man himself lying upon a bed seized with a slight ..... fever which we accordingly report. Aurelius Heron and Aurelius Didymus.

This document restored to us after nearly 16 centuries undoubtedly reproduces the proper official phraseology current at the time for such epistles and forms a specimen model of how they ran. In fact, Dr. Grenfell and Dr. Hunt possess, and summarise only, because so similar in terms, another papyrus, addressed to the same governor by two *δημόσιοι ιατροί*, one of whom was named Herodotus, concerning certain injuries received by a citizen. Another text of

the same kind was published as papyrus 51 of Oxyrrhynchus and a fourth record of the sort is in papyrus of Greek texts No. 647 of the Berlin Museum. A second piece of what may be termed medical literature in the new volume is, without at all straining the connexion, closely allied to the doctrines of "Christian Science" as enunciated by Mrs. Eddy. It is a charm for warding off fever and similar in terms and character to one at Berlin, No. 956 there, which is addressed to pagan deities. The Oxford specimen, however, is worded in the style of the Gnostic sect and ornamented at the end with their symbol, the abraxas, which denoted the Supreme Being. The text reads as follows:—

Verily guard and protect Aria from ague by day, and quotidian ague and ague by night, and slight fever. All this thou wilt graciously do in accordance with thy will first and with her faith, since she is a servant of the living God, and in order that thy name may be glorified for ever.

In conclusion, mention may appropriately be made here of the publication in the "Classical Quarterly," vol. i., of some fragments of the "De Materia Medica" of Dioscorides from pieces of papyri in the Aberdeen Museum and of an article by Dr. K. Sudhoff entitled "Ein neues, ärztliches Gutachten aus Papyrusfunden" in the *Mitteilungen zu Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften* for 1906.

#### ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON.

THE following lectures will be delivered at the College, Pall Mall East, on the Tuesdays and Thursdays mentioned, and on Friday, April 2nd: The Milroy lectures will be delivered by Dr. R. Tanner Hewlett on March 2nd, 4th, and 9th, the subject being Disinfection and Disinfectants; the Goulstonian lectures will be delivered by Dr. A. E. Russell on March 11th, 16th, and 18th, the subject being on Some Disorders of the Cerebral Circulation and their Clinical Manifestations; the Lumleian lectures will be delivered by Dr. Norman Moore on March 23rd, 25th, and 30th, the subject being Rheumatic Fever and Valvular Disease; and the Oliver-Sharpey lectures will be delivered by Professor C. S. Sherrington, M.D. Cantab., F.R.S., on April 1st and 2nd, the subject being the Rôle of Reflex Inhibition in the Coördination of Muscular Action. The lectures will commence at 5 o'clock P.M.

#### THE PREVENTION OF SLEEPING SICKNESS IN NYASSALAND.

As elsewhere in Africa, there is considerable activity in the Nyassaland Protectorate as regards the carrying out of measures to prevent the importation and spread of sleeping sickness. From a report just received from Dr. S. K. Norris, acting principal medical officer, we learn that a vigorous search is being systematically made by medical men specially appointed for sleeping sickness investigation to discover any cases of the disease that may exist in the Protectorate. All natives with enlarged glands are carefully examined and punctures are made to ascertain the presence or absence of trypanosomes in the gland juice. It is probable that imported cases from infected districts may be at present living in Nyassaland, but if such are found they will be strictly segregated. A detailed inquiry is being also made as to the exact distribution of tsetse flies with special reference to the *glossina palpalis*, which, however, has not been found so far in the Protectorate. On the other hand, *glossina morsitans* has an extremely wide distribution both in Nyassaland and in the adjoining territory of North-Eastern Rhodesia. If it be the case, as is asserted by many competent authorities, that sleeping sickness is only spread by the former of these tsetse flies, little fear need be felt that the disease will devastate the Protectorate in which, by all accounts, the conditions necessary for the establishment of endemic foci are absent. As a